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Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living

Keeping Holiday Cooking Safe for Everyone!

Tis the season for family and friend gatherings, social events, and community festivities. Food is always a big part of these events with appetizers, buffets, and punch sitting out for long periods of time. Eat, Drink And Be Merry can change very fast when food poisoning is involved! Food poisoning can be very dangerous, especially for children, those with health risks, and the elderly. Knowing the steps to help avoid food poisoning can help keep your gatherings festive and merry for all.

1. Clean

Keeping your area clean is the first rule for safe food preparation.

- ♦ Wash your hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- ♦ Wash food-contact surfaces with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next item (cutting boards, dishes, utensils, countertops).
- ♦ Rinse fruit and vegetables under cool running water and use a brush to remove dirt.
- ♦ Do not rinse raw meat and poultry before cooking. Washing them can splash bacteria around the room.



2. Separate

Avoid cross contamination, which is bacteria spreading from one item to another.

- ♦ Keep raw eggs, meat, poultry, seafood and their juices away from foods that will not be cooked. Do not store uncooked meat items above ready-to-eat food in refrigerators.
- ♦ Consider using a cutting board for cooked items, one for raw meat, and one for produce to avoid cross contamination.
- ♦ Keep fruit and vegetables that will be eaten raw away from other foods such as raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- ♦ Do not put cooked food or ready to eat food on an unwashed plate.

3. Cook

Cooking food to the proper internal temperature will kill harmful bacteria.

- ♦ Use a food thermometer to make sure meat, poultry, seafood are cooked to a safe temperature. Turkey is safe when the temperature reaches 165 degrees F.
- ♦ Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating.
- ♦ Cook eggs until yolk and white are firm. When cooking eggnog that call for raw eggs, use pasteurized shell eggs, liquid or frozen pasteurized egg products, or powdered egg whites.
- ♦ Do not eat uncooked cookie dough, which contains raw eggs.



4. Chill

Refrigerate foods quickly because harmful bacteria grow rapidly at room temperature.

- ♦ Refrigerate leftovers and takeout foods within 2 hours, including pies.
- ♦ Refrigerators should be at or below 40 degrees F and freezers at 0 degrees F.
- ♦ Leftovers should be used within 3 to 4 days.
- ♦ Never defrost at room temperature. You can use your refrigerator. If you are defrosting under cold running water or microwaving, always cook immediately.
- ♦ Allow enough time for food to defrost.
A 20 pound turkey will take 4 to 5 days to thaw in the refrigerator.
- ♦ Do not taste food that look or smell questionable.

Use care with stuffing!

Always cook to 165 degrees F.

Stuff the bird loosely for better cooking

Once stuffing is prepared, stuff and cook bird immediately

References:

FDA Consumer Health Information www.fda.gov/consumer

FightBac www.fightbac.org/winter/safe-holiday-tips-and-planning

Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services Department for Aging and Independent Living

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